

**MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION**

May 4, 2021

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in a Work Session on May 4, 2021 at 2:18 p.m. at the Government Center, 201 1st Street NE, in Austin, Minnesota.

All members present, viz: Polly Glynn, Chair
Jerry Reinartz
Mike Ankeny
Jeff Baldus
John Mueller
Trish Harren, County Administrator

Also present: Steve Sandvik and Donna Welsh

Sheriff Steve Sandvik requested that the Board consider purchasing body cameras for deputies and correctional officers. The world is changing with legal defense expecting video evidence and potentially placing staff in vulnerable positions without a possible defense. Now a police officer's word often is discredited without video evidence. Statistics indicate that the use of cameras improves employee performance, provides a performance training tool, and minimizes negative interactions with inmates. The Sheriff is obtaining quotes for the Board's consideration. There will be a need to enhance the IT infrastructure to support a body camera system. Currently there are not grant funds available for this purpose.

Sheriff Sandvik invited the Commissioners to participate in a shoot/don't shoot video scenario training simulator available at Riverland College. Sheriff Sandvik has also invited regional legislators to use the simulator. Sheriff Sandvik's goal is to provide lawmaker's with the perspective of what law enforcement faces on a daily basis before making funding and legislative decisions such as use of force that affects their work.

Sheriff Sandvik indicated that the jail medical services provider has not been providing adequate mental health services following the loss of its mental health provider and the vendor is requesting an increase in its service fees. Mental health facilities have been closed and, unfortunately, too many persons with mental health issues end up in the jail.

Sheriff Sandvik's items were referred to committee for further discussion.

Donna Welsh, Finance Manager, provided the Board with information pertaining to the final Justice Center Bond. Ms. Welsh indicated that the bond could be paid off using available cash reserves. The county could save approximately \$800,000 in interest with a bond pay off. The county will be able to maintain the Department of Revenue recommendation of a minimum of five months in cash reserves to meet operating expense obligations. Currently interest revenue generated from investments is only about 1% – 2%.

The Board instructed staff to proceed with the steps necessary to pay off the remaining Justice Center bond and bring it to Board for final approval.

The Board briefly discussed the American Recovery Plan Act and what potentially could be done with the funds. County Administrator Trish Harren shared with the Board some general information but the official guidance had not yet been released. It was noted that broadband for the rural county is expected to be a priority.

The Commissioners revised the Committee Report Assignments to add new Commissioner John Mueller to some of the Committees.

The County Administrator indicated that she will be meeting with the County Auditor-Treasurer, County Recorder and Finance Manager to discuss the findings in consultant Gary Weiers' report and to work on communications between departments and within departments and as a team work together for solutions.

The work session concluded at 4:51 p.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: _____
Chairperson

Attest:

By: _____
Clerk/Administrator

INDEX

D

discussion

American Recovery Plan Act, 120

jail medical services for mental health, 119

justice center bond pay off, 119

land records analysis findings, 120

sheriff department body cameras, 119